

## 4th quarter rally boosts Wash girls

Written by Carl Gonder

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Out-shot, out-rebounded, but not out-hustled.

The No. 5 Washington Warriors used a thrilling 14-4 run in the fourth quarter to engineer an important and hard-fought 57-54 come-from-behind win over No. 8 Iowa City High on Friday night in girls basketball at the Warrior gym.

Washington moved to 12-2 overall (9-2 MVC) and Iowa City High dropped to 12-4 overall (7-4 MVC).

Washington led only once early in the first quarter, before finally taking the lead against at 50-48 with 2:26 left to play. City High dominated the boards (35-20) and scored six more field goals than the Warriors (18 to 12).

Washington won the game by hitting 28-of-38 from the foul line and outscoring City High, 23-10, in the final eight minutes.

"I didn't want to hear that," Warrior Coach Frank Howell said when informed of the rebounding stats. "I knew we were getting outrebounded pretty badly, but I don't think it will hurt my mood too much. It turned out OK."

City High committed 28 turnovers against the vaunted Warrior full-court press. Howell went inside to Jazz Royster down the stretch.

"We had a pretty good matchup with Jazz Royster in the low block and we tried to expose that a little bit," he said. "We did a great job getting her the ball and letting her go to work."

Royster had only two field goals, but hit 13-of-16 free throws en route to a team-high 17 points. Her rugged inside play helped put Washington in the double-bonus with 4:31 left.

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Virginia Johnson, one of the best players in the state, led all scorers with 22 points for Iowa City High and displayed great athleticism and versatility with her ballhandling, shot blocking and rebounding. She'll play at the University of Iowa next year.

"We talked about it all week," Howell said of defending Johnson. "Sometimes there is just not a lot you can do with her. That is about where her average is, so fortunately we were able to prevent her from really going off and breaking the 30 point mark, or something like that."

Mickey Hansche, a crafty sophomore point guard, gave the Warriors fits with four 3-pointers in the first half. She scored 20 points on five bombs and hit 5-of-8 free throws. Her 3-pointer with under two minutes to play tied the score at 51-51, setting the stage for some Warrior heroics.

"We had some looks earlier that didn't go down," Howell said of the comeback. "We had been attacking the paint, so we were able to get them to collapse a little bit more."

Alissa Oney hit the biggest basket of the game with 1:37 left, with her third 3-pointer giving Washington a 54-51 lead. Hansche missed two free throws on the next possession and Washington went into a delay game.

Tasha Roundtree was fouled and hit 1-of-2 free throws with 1:19 left, making it 55-51. Johnson then hit two free throws at the other end, cutting the margin to 55-53.

With 51 seconds left, Washington's Tia Dawson appeared to be fouled under the basket, but there was no call. City High raced to the other end and Hansche was fouled and made 1-of-2 free shots, cutting the margin to 55-54.

Roundtree missed two free throws with 41 seconds left. City High had two great looks to win the game, but both Sierra Chambers and Kelsey Coleman missed from inside eight feet.

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Washington went ahead 57-54 when Royster drained two free throws with 23 seconds left. In a frantic final few seconds, 3-pointers by Coleman and Hansche missed the mark and the Warriors had escaped with a big win.

“We need to keep getting better and we need to keep growing,” Howell said. “This is a good sign for us. Probably sometime again down the tournament trail we will be down again and we have to understand that just because you are down doesn’t mean you are out.”

Johnson and Hansche scored 42 of their team’s 54 points, including 37 of 44 in the first half.

Washington hit only 12-of 56 shots (21 percent) and just 5-for-19 from 3-point range (26 percent). City High was 18-for-53 (34 percent), 5-for-15 from behind the arc (33 percent) and 13-of-19 from the foul line (68 percent).

Washington’s 74 percent free throw shooting (28-of-38) saved the day.

IOWA CITY HIGH (54): Erin Danielson 1 0-0 2, Mickey Hansche 5 5-8 20, Harper Beasley 0 0-2 0, Sierra Chambers 3 0-0 6, Virginia Johnson 7 8-9 22, Kayle Hyche 2 0-0 4. Totals 18 13-19 54.

WASHINGTON (57): Jazz Royster 2 13-16 17, Tia Dawson 3 0-0 6, Jordon Pilcher 0 0-0 0, Alissa Oney 3 1-2 9, Ashley Piper 3 2-2 11, Janay Pritchett 0 2-2 2, Madison Kramer 0 5-6 5, Tasha Roundtree 0 1-4 1, Layloni Beard 1 0-0 2, Gail Barnum 0 0-0 0, Jordan Carr 0 0-0 0, Kelli Klaus 0 0-0 0, Chelsey McMahon 0 0-0 0, Abby Herb 0 4-6 4, Brooke Foreman 0 0-0 0, Lauren Goodlove 0 0-0 0, Callie Stone 0 0-0 0. Totals 12 28-38 57.

Halftime – Iowa City High 28, Washington 23. 3-point goals – Washington 5 (Piper 3, Oney 2). City High 5 (Hansche 5).